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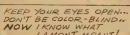




HELLO, SANDRA GOING TO FINISH YOUR SWIM ?

OH, HELLO, MARGO ... I... THOUGHT YOU'D GONE WITH THE SEARCH PARTY. I ... SEEING YOU LATERI

























THE METEOR FALLS AND MAKES









... A CRATER MORE THAN A MILE IN DIAMETER !!!

THEY ARE ONLY TINY PARTICLES THEY ARE ONLY INY PARTICLES' OF METALS BUT THEY ARE STREWN SO THRU THE WHOLE METEOR THAT YOU'D HAVE TO MASH IT UP AND THEN STRAIN OUT THE LITTLE OF VALUE THAT THERE

WELL, THERE'S SOME THING DIRTY AFOOT.
I KNOW DAT
GUY WID THE
DYNAMITE.
HIS NAMES SOLPY.

HE'S AN OLD TIME SAFE CRACKER

LOOK!

UNDER COVER OF THIS EXPLOSION OUR HEROES ROLL OUT OF THE BACK OF THE TRUCK TO THE GROUND. THEY ARE AWAWARD... BECAUSE OF BEING BOUND.































LATER ... IN DOC'S

LEO DUROCHER

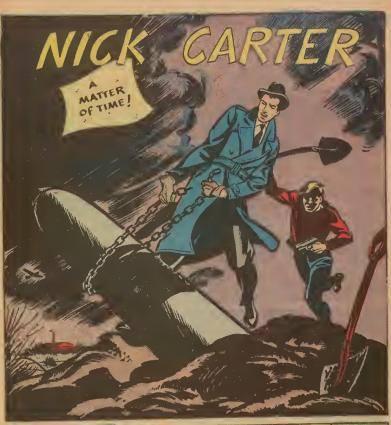
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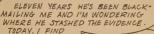






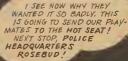






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> SURE, TEN THOUSAND BUCKS FOR CONVICTING PROOF

GOOD! TURN IT OVER TO THE HACKIE HERE. EXCEPT FOR HIS HELP I'D

MR. CARTER WONTCHA CUT IT OUT? IF MY PALS EVER HEAR YA' CALLIN'

ME DAT

I'LL NEVER LIVE

IT DOWN!

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CALL ME ROSEBUD! DAT'LL SURE BUY A LOT OF WAR BONDS!



WRITTEN WITHOUT CONSONANTS

Nick looked so proud that he was almost ready to burst as he-nodded at his foster son, Chick, who was trim and good looking in bis winged uniform of the Air. Force of the U. S.

Nick cleared his throat and said, "I don't have to introduce you members of the Inner Circle to Chick Certer, after all he started the club. I've just been acting in his behalf pro tem. He's home on leave. What's more, he provided the solution to a problem that I don't mind telling you had me completely muddled."

"Whoa," smiled Chick, "Take it easy, Dad. I just happened to get a hunch! If I hadn't stumbled onto it, you would have!"

"Perhaps, in time," Nick answered. "But there wasn't any time! You put your finger on the only thing that could have helped us trap a ruthless killer!"

Beef, Sue and all the other members of the Inner Circle smiled in pleased anticipation. This had all the ear marks of a good story.

Chick chuckled, "Let's stop this Alphonse and Gaston routine and let the members in on what happened. You tell 'em, Dad." "Well," said Nick, "it began the first day Chick got home." We were sitting, chewing the fat, when I got a frantic call from the police. We hustled right down to the home of Alfred Murray. He's the well known author. Some of you may have read his stuff in the slick magazines.

"We found him as the police had, dead. Shot through the heart. He was slumped over the machine that had brought him fame and a considerable fortune. The top portion of his body had fallen over the keyboard of the typewriter.

"The police had no clues. Three people had been in to see Murray, but all of them had seen the dead man on business and all swore he was alive when they saw him. The first visitor on the deadly list, for we were sure that one of them was lying, was his agent, a Miss Lynd. Next came the man who illustrated his stories, an artist named Inigo Eliot and the last visitor and the one we were most suspicious of, a man named Lyle Larraby.

"Larraby was a close friend of the dead man's but was also known to have been interested in the dead man's wife." Chick interrupted, "Just to be completely fair to the members, let me say that one of those three people was the killer!"

Nick smiled, "Right. Let's see now where was I? Oh... we were in the dead man's study; we looked around the room. There wasn't much to see. A well furnished writer's study with the walls lined with books. On the desk, next to Murray's dead body were some pages of the manuscript of his last story which he had been destined



never to finish. While we waited for the medical examiner to get there so we could move the body, Chick read the last pages of the story that lay on the desk next to the typewriter.

"When the M.E. finally got there and we were able to see what was under the dead man, we merely found a page of paper in the typewriter. It was blank but for a line at the top of the page. Obviously death had written the period to the line that Murray had been typing. He had written, seemingly as the carry over of his last page, 'written without consonants'."

"That was where I got the edge on everyone," Chick interrupted again, "you see, that line had nothing to do with what he'd written on the page before!"

Nick nodded, "Yes and that was the clue that trapped the murdered!"

The members of the Inner Circle all looked blank. Even Sue, generally above the average in perception, was completely baffled and her face showed it. Chick grinned at her obvious puzzlement.

Nick said, "Oh it's all right, don't feel stupid. If it makes you feel any better, I missed the clue too. That's where Chick stepped in! He saw that the dead man had left a message that named his killer!"

Sue said, "You mean to say that the three words 'written without consonants' somehow contain a clue or a message that enabled you to nab the killer?

"Exactly," said Nick. "And it took my flying scion, here, to see it! However, to get on with it. After we had completed our examination of the room, Chick, looking like the cat that ate the canary, asked to have the three people who had last seen Murray, brought to the room.



"The corpse had of course been long since removed when we gathered, but somehow there was death in the air of the quiet study. The three people, the two men and the girl, all seemed so ordinary, so much like anyone you see in the street, that it was hard for me, at least, to realize that one of them had blood stained hands. Chick on the other hand, knew which one it was, who bore the mark of Cain.

"They were seated and I looked at Miss Lynd. She was normally attractive and although distressed at the idea of being questioned in a murder investigation, normally self possessed. The artist, Inigo Eliot, was pale but that seemed to be his normal complexion, he was dark haired and fair skinned. Larraby was most nervous. He couldn't sit still. He smoked cigarette after cigarette, lighting one from the butt of the last."

"In this day of cigarette shortages that was a feat," laughed Sue. "Did you ask how he'd come into possession of a treasure trove like that? My father is rolling his own these days?"

Nick smiled at Sue, "You may not believe this but I was so befogged, so completely at a loss, that I almost suspected Larraby merely because he had those cigarettes! I figured they were probably black market cigs and therefor, I suspected him as being an unpatriotic, no-good! Be that as it may, as they were all seated, Chick in his uniform, took over.

"They seemed surprised that a pilot was in charge of a murder investigation but so much else was on their minds that none of them commented.

"From here on, I'm going to fet Chick carry the ball. It's his story." Nick smiled at Chick.

"Okay. I asked Larraby and Miss Lynd if they knew of anything that might have upset the dead man, if he might have killed himself, for, after all, the gun was laying just at his arm. He might have shot himself and then dropped the gun. Both the girl and Larraby said that the very idea of him killing himself was preposterous. That he had loved life. Inigo Eliot, the artist, was the only one that intimated that there might have been something preying on Murray's mind.

"Then Eliot really upset the apple cart, he turned to Larraby and said, 'You were the last one to see him, did he say anything to you?"

"Larraby turned all colors, lit another cigarette and said, 'I may as well speak up. I've been lying all along! Murray was dead when I went into the study! I found him there and was afraid to say anything be-

cause everyone knew of my interest in his wife!"

"That was all I needed," said Chick. "That had been the only thing that was puzzling me! You see, I knew that the killer was the second person that had seen Murray!

"The way I reconstructed the murder was 'this. Murray was at his desk when his killer came in. Murray saw death staring at him out of his killer's eyes...so he finished typing out a line. That line had his killer's initials in it! But it was so cutely hidden, that the killer, reading it, didn't recognize it for what it was, his death sentence!



"Sue mentioned the line a minute ago . . . 'written without consonants'. How would you write 'written' without consonants? The consonants in the word written are w . . r . . tt and n! That leaves the vowels . . i . . e!

"And those vowels were the initials of the murderer, Inigo Eliot!" Chick grinned at them.

Beef said, "Phew! No wonder the killer didn't see any danger in the dead man's message!"

On that note the meeting ended. Chick and Sue, Beef and Nick all left the hall together. Nick waved to the other members, "See you next month, same time, same place!"



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